

REMARKS

The Examiner has restricted claims in the case to two distinct inventions designated as Group I, claims 1-21 drawn to a vacuum apparatus for removing water from a fire safety system and an apparatus for repairing a fire safety system by maintaining a reduced pressure within the system and Group II, claims 22-30 drawn to a method of repairing a sprinkler system and a method of repairing sprinkler heads.

Applicants have elected, without prejudice, the invention of Group I drawn to claims 1-21. By this election, Applicants do not admit, nor do Applicants waive the right to argue against at a later date, the Examiner's statement that the groups of inventions are patentably distinct. Applicants expressly reserve the right to present the claims of Group II, or other claims, in one or more divisional, continuation, or continuation-in-part applications at a later date.

The Examiner has further requested that the Applicants elect one of two distinct species designated as Species 1, claims 1-10 drawn to a vacuum apparatus for removing water from a fire safety system and Species 2, claims 11-21 drawn to an apparatus for repairing a fire safety system by maintaining a reduced pressure within the system.

Applicants have elected, without prejudice, the invention of Species 1 drawn to claims 1-10 for prosecution on the merits. By this election, Applicants do not admit, nor do Applicants waive the right to argue against at a later date, the Examiner's statement that the species are patentably distinct. Applicants expressly reserve the right to present the claims of Species 2, or other claims, in one or more divisional, continuation, or continuation-in-part applications at a later date.

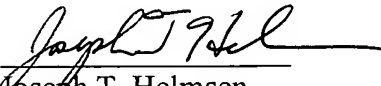
In addition, Applicants have added claims 31-34 which are method claims directed to methods of repairing a sprinkler system. Applicants have further added claims 35-45 which are apparatus claims directed to an apparatus for repairing a fire safety system. In particular, claim

35 represents a generic claim. The added claims find support in the originally filed specification and, thus, present no new matter.

In view of the above election and remarks, Applicants believe that the application is in condition for examination and allowance on the merits. Favorable resolution is respectfully requested.

This response has been timely filed. Accordingly, no fee is required. In the event that a fee is required for this response, the Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge such fees to Deposit Account No. 50-0436.

Respectfully Submitted,


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